

# THE TRANSPORTATION LINK



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From the Desk of  
**Ronald A. Stroman**  
Acting Director of the  
Office of Small and Disadvantaged  
Business Utilization

November is the month that we traditionally highlight the contributions that Native American-owned businesses make to the US Department of Transportation (DOT). This year we are highlighting four Native American-owned businesses that are successfully contributing to the transportation sector. I think you will find their stories fascinating.

In October, President Clinton issued an Executive Order for all federal agencies to increase opportunities for small disadvantaged businesses. DOT looks forward to working with the small disadvantaged business community to support this important initiative.

At the end of September, the Office of General Counsel of DOT released additional Questions and Answers providing clarification on the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program. We will continue to provide you with updated information, as it becomes available.

The week of Thanksgiving, safety organizations across the country are placing emphasis on drivers who drink, transport kids, and fail to buckle them up. I hope you will help us to address this serious problem while encouraging family, friends, and co-workers to ***Buckle Up America!***

## Native American-Owned Business and the US DOT

The US Department of Transportation (DOT) has made it a priority to expand opportunities and promote economic growth for all businesses - especially small, Native American-owned, women-owned, and disadvantaged businesses to participate in DOT and DOT-assisted contracts and grants.

While the number of minority-owned businesses in general has been growing, the rate of growth of Native American firms has been very impressive. Native American firms have increased in number by 37% annually over the past 5 years, while their sales growth has increased at a rate of 55% annually. This growth is concentrated in fields such as construction, engineering, and general consulting.

The DOT is meeting this growth by providing targeted outreach and advocacy efforts to encourage and support Native American-owned - as well as other small, woman-owned, and disadvantaged businesses.

Featured in this article are the stories of four Native American-owned businesses that work in the transportation sector. They demonstrate the expanding arenas that Native American-owned firms have worked in with success, while focusing on the challenges and triumphs related to this pursuit of continued growth. The US Department of Transportation is proud of the unique contributions each one of these firms has made to the economic growth of our nation.

### Cheryl R. Cohenour and CRC & Associates, Inc.

CRC & Associates, Inc., owned by Cheryl R. Cohenour, was started in 1988 in Tulsa, Oklahoma as a single employee hazardous waste management firm. Cheryl left a successful engineering company and started her own consulting business to afford herself the opportunity to spend more time with her daughter.

Having heard about SBA's 8(a) program successes, Cheryl was optimistic about the opportunities available for a successful Native American, woman-owned company. She was also concerned about failing however. She asked herself the question her father emphasized throughout her life, "Cheryl, what is the worst thing that could happen?" Answering that question, she decided to forge ahead.

In addition to the 8(a) program, Cheryl took advantage of the 7(J) Management and Technical Assistance Program. The 7(J) program is available to owners and senior officers of 8(a) firms that would like take part in intensive week-long training sessions. Knowledgeable about her field, but inexperienced in running a business, Cheryl applied and was accepted into the Advanced Minority Business Executive Program held at Dartmouth. There she was taught effective techniques to grow and develop her busi-



**OSDBU**

Office of Small  
and Disadvantaged  
Business Utilization

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ness. Through continuing mentor opportunities, CRC has been able to pass their lessons learned on to new, developing 8(a) companies.

In 1996, CRC was awarded its first contract with the DOT Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) where it provides engineering and technical support services. The Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR), Archie Dillard enthusiastically recommends CRC by stating, "CRC is great to work with...responsive and flexible...exactly what the government looks for in a contractors." CRC hopes to further develop their relationship with the DOT.



The company's success almost snuck up on Cheryl. She points out, "I turned around one day and realized that I had built something." Cheryl was not surprised by her success however. She attributes CRC's accomplishment to the experience and talent of her employees. "Everyone here is extremely proud of what we have done. I use the word 'We' a lot. I would not be here without the employees." Throughout CRC's growth from a single employee company to one with twenty full-time employees, her focus has remained on providing solutions to her customer's problems while remembering that CRC also provides careers, income, and personal growth for its employees.

Originally focused solely on hazardous waste management, CRC has broadened their core competencies to include consulting and engineering, drilling, laboratory, and commercial construction. Cheryl admits that diversity has been critical to their growth. In the future, she

would like to maintain a steady, controlled growth with continued diversification guided by the expertise and talent of her employees.

*For more information on CRC & Associates, Inc., phone (918) 582-9110, fax (918) 583-7948, email [crc@crcassociatesusa.com](mailto:crc@crcassociatesusa.com), or check out their website at <http://www.crcandassociates.com>*

### Patricia and Tonya Parker and NAMS, Inc.

Native American Management Services (NAMS) of McLean, Virginia, was incorporated in March of 1992 by sisters Patricia and Tonya Parker. This company is rooted in their experience, employees, and a dedication to increasing creativity, productivity, and teamwork in federal and tribal governments, as well as private industry. NAMS attains this goal by supporting their clients in the areas of conference management, management support services, financial services, and training and technical assistance.



The Parker sisters conceived the idea to start their own company while they were working for the Indian Health Service (IHS). Together Pat and Tonya have over 20 years of experience working to uphold the government's commitment to raising the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of the American Indian and Alaska Native people to the highest level. They used that experience, coupled with their upbringing in a Native American tribe, to identify the need of a company that would bridge the gap between the U.S. government and Tribal and Alaskan Native governments.

"The empowerment of any community means that you have the latest information to make the best decisions for the community," says Patricia Parker.

Since incorporating and gaining 8(a) status in 1992, NAMS has steadily grown from \$50,000 per annum to approximately \$4 million in 1999. Utilizing their local SBA office, has helped NAMS grow at a steady pace and obtain additional business. Currently 55% of their revenue is from 8(a) set-aside contracts and they anticipate that number will be reduced to 50% by the time they graduate from the program in two years.



In September of this year, NAMS was awarded their first contract with the DOT. The 4-year, 8(a) set-aside award is with the U.S. Coast Guard to manage their Transition Assistance Program. NAMS provides comprehensive employment in training services information to Coast Guard personnel and their spouses within 80 days prior to their separation. Pat and Tonya attribute their success to three key components. The first key is a good financial structure and cost accounting system to ensure accountability. As a former federal government project officer, Pat has a strong appreciation of this.

The second key is building a solid reputation for doing quality work and delivering the results on time and within budget.

The third and most important component is to create an environment that employees enjoy and one in which they can grow. One way they have done this is by putting their earnings back into the company. They pay themselves moderate salaries while investing in programs such as comprehensive benefits for their employees.

Pat and Tonya attribute their low turnover rate to this policy. They state, "We don't want our employees to have

to choose between family and work. As long as the quality is excellent, on time, within budget, and the client is happy - we are more than happy to work around our employee's personal lives."

Although NAMS has significantly increased their annual revenue since incorporation, Pat and Tonya would like to maintain the existing size of the company. Eventually they would like to utilize NAMS earnings to start a non-profit that will focus on community reform such as social, health, and economic issues for both the Native American community as well as the U.S. general population.

*For more information on Native American Management Services, Inc. phone (703) 821-2226, fax (703) 821-3680, email [namsinc@namsinc.org](mailto:namsinc@namsinc.org), or check out their website on <http://www.namsinc.org>.*

### **Advanced Design Systems, Inc. and Vernon D. Stonerock**

Advanced Design Systems, Inc. (ADS), founded by Vernon D. Stonerock, in Longwood, Florida is a Native American-owned, small disadvantaged design and engineering firm committed to quality products and services. As an electrical engineer for the Air Force, Vernon experienced first hand the need for well-designed, developed, and documented devices. After leaving the Air Force, Vernon created ADS with the intention of providing this much needed service to the government.



**Vernon D. Stonerock**

Started in 1979 as a part-time consulting firm, and incorporated in 1988, ADS has steadily increased in size. Using his experience and knowledge with the Air Force to get his foot in the door of government contracting, Vernon's first contract was with the Air Force performing flight safety services. His one-man company has grown to twelve employees, with an increase in revenue from \$98,000 to \$800,000 in 1999. ADS now has a variety of contracts with both commercial and government clients, ranging from engineering services to device engineering and design.

ADS' largest contract is a 5-year, small business set-aside with the US Coast Guard. ADS supports the Coast Guard's VTS (Vessel Traffic Services) traffic control tower. This maintenance contract ensures that the tools used to control vessel traffic are working. The job requires a contractor with exceptional attention to detail.

Jeanie Thorne, Contracting Officer on the ADS contract for the US Coast Guard, is very pleased with the work ADS has provided over the past two years. "ADS is responsive and eager to perform successfully. Their commitment to detail and the highest quality makes them an exemplary small business."

Vernon attributes the growth of ADS to a solid relationship with its clients, and the attention to detail and quality of its products. ADS is proud of its quality driven method of design and development. This commitment to turning out the best possible product is what keeps their customers returning with additional work.

In the future, Vernon would like to see ADS slowly increase their presence in the device design and manufacturing field. Although pleased with the development of ADS over the past ten years, Vernon hopes to see a further increase in annual revenues - perhaps with the aid of additional 8(a) and small business set-aside contracts. Regardless of growth, Vernon is committed to maintaining the reputation of ADS as a company rooted in dedication to quality and superior service.

*For more information on Advanced Design Systems, Inc. phone (407) 265-0797, fax (407) 265-0799, email [vernstonerock@cs.com](mailto:vernstonerock@cs.com)*

### **Bowhead Transportation Corporation (BTC), Bob Leonard, and the Ukpeagvik Iñupiat Village of Bowhead Alaska**

Bob Leonard manages Bowhead Transportation Corporation (BTC), a common carriage barge business servicing the coastal villages of the North Slope Borough of Alaska. Different from many OSDBU 8(a) success stories, BTC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Ukpeagvik Iñupiaslet Corporation (UIC), the native village corporation of Barrow, Alaska. BTC was incorporated in the State of Alaska and began operation in August of 1982.



**Bob Leonard and  
Board Members of Bowhead  
Transportation Company**

Bowhead's mission is to optimize profit for the growth of the company and the socio-economic benefit of the shareholders. All Bowhead shareholders are Iñupiaq people, members of the Ukpeagvik native village of Barrow, Alaska. The Iñupiat have been living in the Barrow area for approximately 4,000 years. Knowledge of the natural environment and how to make use of the resources was essential to the traditional skills of the Iñupiat and BTC



has adopted this culture and values.

BTC is organized as a Vessel Operating Common Carrier but with the help of the SBA 8(a) program has recently branched into other services such as help-desk and IT support. The type of materials they transport range from groceries to modular housing, with building and construction materials being the highest volume. Additionally, Bowhead provides winter overland transportation of fuels and cargo between inland and coastal villages within the North Slope.



Along with the Board Members, all of whom live in the Iñupiat Village, Bob is responsible for making all of the core strategic business plans for this developing company.

Bob has remained at the helm of this corporation since joining Bowhead in 1983, shortly after its inception. In 1998, as the cargo transportation industry was diminishing in size, the Board Members tasked Bob with researching the 8(a) program to increase their revenue base and expand their potential business opportunities. BTC obtained 8(a) status in May of 1998 and has since received three 8(a) contracts including one with DOT. 8(a) contracts now account for 45% of their total annual revenue.

Bob attests that without the 8(a) program Bowhead would have remained focused on a reducing market. BTC has an 8(a) contract was with the DOT, Office of the Secretary (OST) performing LAN and general IT support services. This first contract opened the doors for BTC not only to the 8(a) market, but also to a new core competency: IT technology.

When asked how BTC made the transition from cargo transport to IT services Bob replied, "recognizing that cargo transportation was a reducing market, we looked at our employees and realized that, of their varied talents, a good major-

## Thanksgiving Safety – America Buckles Up Children

This Thanksgiving week, police are placing emphasis on drivers who drink, transport kids and fail to buckle them up.

Impaired driving is a concern for every person who travels by car. But it might surprise you to know that the majority of children who die at the hands of impaired drivers aren't killed by impaired drivers who run into them, but are the victims of drinking parents or caregivers who transport them.

A May 2000 study in the Journal of the American Medical Association reported that nearly two out of three chil-

ity were also skilled in the technology field. It was a natural transition for us."

BTC, has grown from 3 employees in 1982 to 60 today. They hope to see a steady, continued growth. Bob and Bowhead's shareholders plan to continue developing their new core competency in technology.

*For more information on Bowhead Transportation Company phone (800) 347-0049, fax (907) 562-5901, email [info@bowhead.com](mailto:info@bowhead.com), or check out their website on <http://www.bowhead.com>.*

## Conclusion

Minority-owned firms having grown over the past ten years at approximately double the rate of all firms in the U.S. economy, in terms of both new firms and total sales. DOT is committed to mirroring this growth by expanding opportunities for small, disadvantaged, Native American-owned, and women-owned businesses. These four success stories demonstrate the opportunities available to Native American-owned businesses to work in the field of transportation.

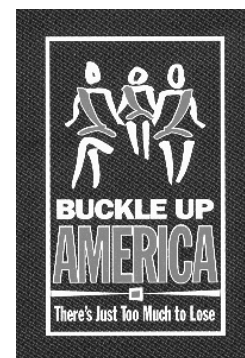
dren who are killed in alcohol-related crashes are passengers riding with an impaired driver. In the majority of these cases, children were riding with an impaired driver who failed to buckle them up.

The study – which analyzed a decade of national crash data – found a direct correlation between the driver's alcohol consumption and the likelihood of children being properly restrained. Specifically, the study found that the more alcohol the impaired driver consumed, the greater the probability that children would not be buckled up.

From November 20-26, 2000 – as part of the Buckle Up America campaign and the Operation ABC Mobilization: America Buckles Up Children – thousands of law enforcement agencies nationwide are stepping up their enforcement activities to protect children from two of the greatest risks they face: riding unbuckled and impaired drivers.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) is teaming up with the Air Bag & Seat Belt Safety Campaign, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board to support the Mobilization this November.

Police agencies will increase patrols and conduct roadside checkpoints designed to protect kids and identify impaired drivers. **Buckle Up America!**



*For more information on this Thanksgiving week initiative, view the NHTSA web site at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/outreach/safesobr/abcmobilization/index.html>*

## New Questions and Answers on DBE Program

On September 22, 2000 the Office of the General Counsel of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) released three more sets of questions and answers, providing further clarification on the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program. The questions are as follows:

*When is it appropriate for a recipient to require a firm certified under former Part 23 to reapply for certification?*

*What actions does a recipient take after it requests a currently certified firm to reapply for certification?*

*Can a recipient remove the eligibility of a currently certified firm through any means other than those of 26.87?*



The answers to these questions, and many other sets of questions and answers on the DOT DBE program, can be viewed on the OSDBU web site at <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/business/dbe/dbeqna.html>

The General Counsel of the Department of Transportation has reviewed all of these questions and answers and approved them as consistent with the language and intent of 49 CFR Part 26. These questions and answers therefore represent the institutional position of the Department of Transportation.

### PRESIDENT CLINTON ORDERS MORE CONTRACTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISADVANTAGED BUSINESSES

On October 10, President Clinton ordered all federal agencies to increase opportunities for small disadvantaged businesses in the \$200 billion a year government-contracting marketplace.

In the order, President Clinton indicates, "These businesses are of vital importance to job growth and to the economic strength of the United States, but have faced historic exclusion and underutilization in federal procurement."

Each agency that has procurement authority must develop a long-term comprehensive plan to expand opportunities for disadvantaged businesses, particularly 8(a) Program participants, Small Disadvantaged Businesses (SDBs) and Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs).

In support of the order, SBA Administrator Aida Alvarez states, "In the last 10 years SBA's 8(a) business development program has seen contract awards increased by 81 percent, from \$3.4 billion in 1990 to \$6.2 billion in 1999. That's a good step in the right direction, but more still needs to be done and that's exactly what the President's order intends to accomplish."

The Order outlines initiatives for federal agencies to undertake – and responsibilities of the SBA – to support this Executive Order and ensure increased access to federal prime and subcontracts for 8(a), SDB and MBE firms.



You can view this Executive Order at <http://www.pub.whitehouse.gov/uri-res/I2R?urn:pdi://oma.eop.gov.us/2000/10/11/1.text.1>

You can view the Statement by the President on this Executive Order at <http://www.pub.whitehouse.gov/uri-res/I2R?urn:pdi://oma.eop.gov.us/2000/10/10/10.text.1>.

You can view a press release by the SBA on this Executive Order at <http://www.sba.gov/news/current00/00-92.html>

## Additions to the *FY 2001 Procurement Forecast*

The *FY 2001 Procurement Forecast* was posted on the OSDBU web site on October 1, 2000 at <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/business/procurement/forecast.html> and already approximately 200 more items have been added.

This document serves as a central location for anticipated procurement opportunities from all of the Department of Transportation's Operating Administrations.

We recommend that you check the *Procurement Forecast* on-line on a routine basis for new opportunities. New items will continue to be added as they become available.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR October/November 2000

| DATE                    | EVENT   | CONTACT   |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| December 14-15          | ITS America Trade Associations Legislative Conference on ITS and TEA21<br>Washington, DC                    | Katrina Mayo<br>(202) 484-4549<br><a href="mailto:kmayo@itsa.org">kmayo@itsa.org</a><br><a href="http://www.itsa.org">http://www.itsa.org</a> |
| Every 2nd & 4th Tuesday | Information Sessions on Gaining Grants/Contracts SBIR & STTR Programs<br>Sponsored by SBA<br>Washington, DC | Darrell Williams<br>(202) 887-6709  |



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